January/February 1992 Volume 17, Number 1

News for You

A summary of recent news stories from the University of California, San Francisco

UCSF

City's First Lung Transplant

Allen J. Balderson

Immediately before leaving the hospital, clinical pharmacist Theresa Salazar (left) describes to Betty Cook her home medications.

Betty Cook of Cotati in Sonoma County has become the first patient in the new lung transplant program at UCSF. Cook, who has been suffering from chronic emphysema, had her right lung replaced in a four-hour operation in October.

Before the procedure, Cook's emphysema left her unable to take more than two or three steps at a time. The lung transplant is expected to allow her to return to a life of normal activity.

The surgical team was led by Fraser Keith, who also directs the UCSF heart transplant program. The medical director of the lung transplant program is Jeffrey Golden.

The procedure, the first lung transplant performed at a San Francisco hospital, marks the continuing development of UCSF's comprehensive transplant program. Keith plans to perform all types of lung transplants as part of the UCSF program—single and double lung, and heart-lung procedures. A majority of patients function adequately with one healthy lung, but the type of transplant they require depends on the condition causing damage to their lungs, he said.

Simple Plunger Could Change CPR

A family's desperate—and successful—efforts to revive a heart attack patient by pumping on his chest with a bathroom plunger prompted UCSF researchers to develop a technique that holds promise as the first practical improvement in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) since the technique was developed three decades ago.

The new method of CPR, known as "active compression-decompression resuscitation," or "ACD resuscitation," uses a simple, hand-held suction device to pump on the chest, drawing additional blood to the heart and air to the lungs. A study found the method resulted in more blood being pumped from the heart and more air entering the lungs than by standard CPR.

"The method is similar to standard CPR when pressing on the chest, but we also expand the chest with the suction device. The same action also causes air to flow into and out of the lungs," says Todd J. Cohen, cardiology research fellow who heads the CPR study team.

Researchers began investigating the technique after a heart attack patient, who had been revived through CPR performed with a plunger, arrived at SFGH. Although many viewed the incident as a curiosity, Cohen wanted to determine whether the anecdotal case held scientific merit. His study involved performing standard CPR and ACD resuscitation in random order on eight dogs. Overall, the ACD method resulted in better blood flow through the heart and body, better ventilation, and better blood pressure, Cohen says.

A CPR working group has been formed by Cohen to examine the mechanisms of ACD resuscitation in humans. Results will be presented next March at the annual meeting of the American College of Cardiology in Dallas.

UCSF School of Nursing Designated a WHO Collaborating Center

The World Health Organization has designated the UCSF School of Nursing as a WHO Collaborating Center for Research and Clinical Training in Nursing. This designation recognizes the School's leadership role in the international primary health arena over the last several years and its impact on the future of world health care. Only three other nursing schools across the nation carry this WHO honor.

Governments from around the world look to the WHO, a specialized agency of the United Nations, for advice and practical assistance in strengthening health care services; training doctors and health workers; controlling or eradicating major diseases such as AIDS, malaria, TB, and leprosy; protecting the health of mothers and children; improving sanitation and water supplies; and promoting mental health.

The WHO nursing center will be co-directed at UCSF by professors Margretta Styles and William Holzemer. Styles is former dean of the School and Holzemer is assocate dean for research. The School will continue to host international visitors, students and scholars and will provide academic and clinical programs tailored to meet their needs. Collaborative research projects will be developed with colleagues around the world, and the School will help prepare people for leadership positions in international nursing and primary health care positions.

"We will be responsible for supporting the goals of 'health for all' by providing research and clinical training in nursing to colleagues worldwide," says Styles.

"We also will support primary health care projects in California. It's as appropriate here as it is in the developing world," says Holzemer.

To celebrate the WHO designation, the School of Nursing will host a gala inaugural dinner on Thursday, January 30, at the World Trade Club in the Ferry Building beginning at 6 p.m. The following day, nursing professionals from around the world, including the Far East and Latin America, will join UCSF faculty in a full-day symposium entitled "Nursing and the International Primary Health Care Agenda." Held on campus in Cole Hall, the symposium will begin at 8:30 a.m. Registration is needed for both the dinner and symposium. For further information call 476-6975.

In Brief

Mount Zion Community Meeting

In January, UCSF officials will hold a community meeting to provide an opportunity for input and discussion on physical and programmatic plans for the Mount Zion Medical Center of UCSF, including the need for additional medical office space. The meeting will be held in the Mount Zion community. For specific date, time and location, call Phyllis Brown, UCSF Community Relations, 476-8433.

UCSF's Long Range Planning

UCSF is continuing the long range planning process for the campus' next 15 years. *Directions*, a new newsletter of the UCSF Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), will be distributed at key points during the LRDP process to keep city residents and the campus community informed, and to encourage widespread involvement in the process. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for *Directions*, or if you have any questions about the process, call Barbara Bagot, UCSF Community Relations, 476-3206.

Long-Term Care Proposed

UCSF researchers and a national physicians group have proposed a government-financed program that would make long-term care available to millions of elderly and disabled people in the U.S. The program, a single, uniform benefit package available to anyone who needs long-term care, would replace the current fragmented system that is too geared to nursing home care, denies critical services to many disabled people, and leaves thousands of families bankrupt, the authors argue. Lead author of the proposal was Charlene Harrington of the UCSF Institute for Health & Aging.

New Vision Care & Research Unit Opens

A new Vision Care & Research Unit has opened on campus. Located on the top floor of the UC Hospital building, and adjacent to the Koret Vision Research Laboratory dedicated three years ago, the new research unit completes the physical facilities of the Beckman Vision Center to make one complete eye center. "The combined facilities bring together the best and brightest minds from many disciplines across the campus to attack the most serious and blinding eye diseases, from macular degeneration to retinitis pigmentosa, from ocular cancers to AIDS-related blindness," says ophthalmologist Steven Kramer, director of the Beckman Vision Center. For an appointment, see your physician for a referral, or call 476-3700.

Center for Positive Care Opens

The Center for Positive Care, located at 3180-18th Street near Folsom, officially opened in October. One of the first of its kind in the US, the center combines in one location all the information an HIV infected person needs to know.

Besides basic HIV information, the Center offers, or soon will offer, where and when clinical drug trials are being held, HIV testing, referral services, seminars on early HIV intervention and gynecological issues, support groups, and psychosocial counseling. It is a collaborative effort of the UCSF AIDS Health Project, the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention, the S.F. Department of Public Health, and 16 other city organizations. For further information call 476-3644.

Meanwhile, the UCSF Center on Deafness and the Hearing Society now offer special services for deaf and hearing impaired people infected with HIV. For further information call 476-4980 (voice) or 476-7600 (TDD).

What's happening

January/February
A bimonthly calen
events at UC San

Special Events

Wed., Jan. 22
Twilight Concert: Music in the Library Recital. UCSF musicians perform music from around the world. $2/$4. Lange Reading Rm., UCSF Library, 530 Parnassus. 5:30 p.m. Preceded by wine & cheese reception.

Thurs., Jan. 30
Spaghetti Dinner Benefit. Western Star Dancers put on a spaghetti dinner with proceeds going to the UCSF AIDS Health Project & the Center for Positive Care. $6.50 in advance, $7 at door. Elephant Walk, Castro St. at 18th. 6:30-9 p.m. Call 476-6430 for tickets.

Thurs., Jan. 30 & Fri., Jan. 31
School of Nursing Celebrates WHO Designation. Gala inaugural dinner on Thursday at the World Trade Club, Ferry Building, 6 p.m., followed by an all-day symposium on Friday entitled "Nursing & the International Primary Health Care Agenda." Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. 9 a.m. Call 476-6975 to register for both events. (See article on page 1 for details.)

Mikkel Aaland

Wed., Feb. 12
How to Develop Self-Esteem in Infants & Toddlers. Learn the components of self-esteem & what care providers can do to foster a positive self-image in children. Co-sponsored by UCSF Child & Elder Care Referral Service, Community Health Talks, Public Service Outreach Program, Great Expectations Programs for Parents, Marilyn Reed Lucia Child Care Study Center & the UCSF Women's Resource Center. Chancellor's Rm., UCSF-Laurel Heights, 3333 California St. 7-9 p.m. Free parking available. Call 476-6667.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration

UCSF commemorates the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with the following events:

Mon., Jan. 13
Demographics, Politics & Power. Panel discussion includes union representative Katie Quan, attorney Tony Serra, UC Berkeley sociologist Troy Duster, *Philippine News* editor Alex Esclamado & human rights advocate Richard Trudell. Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Tues., Jan. 14
The Role of Women in the Black Panther Party. Ericka Huggins, a Black Panther from 1967-1981, talks about her experiences & how MLK shaped her life. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Wed., Jan. 15
Martin Luther King, Jr., 3rd Annual Cultural Festival. Celebrate the diversity of UCSF with food, arts, crafts, displays & entertainment. Millberry Union Gym, 500 Parnassus. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Wed., Jan. 15
Life, Legacy & Vision. Rev. Cecil Williams, Glide Memorial Church, celebrates the dream & inspiration of MLK. Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 16
MLK Award Ceremony. One staff employee, one faculty member & one student to be honored. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Fri., Jan. 17
Melba Pattillo Beals. One of the Little Rock Nine to speak. Rm. 125, UCSF-Mission Center Building, 1855 Folsom St. Noon-1 p.m.

Black Heritage Month

UCSF celebrates its Black heritage throughout the month of February with the following:

Tues., Feb. 4
Cole Hall Cabaret—Kerrigan Black. This singer/composer presents his one-man show, "Tryin' to Get Home," the history of African-American music from minstrelsy to gospel to rap. Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Noon. *Special children's show: 10:30 a.m.*

Wed., Feb. 5
Drawing Lessons from Our Past—For an Improved Future. UC Berkeley's Pedro A. Noguera reflects on the advances & setbacks of the African-American experience. Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Thurs., Feb. 13
Hard Time? Gender Bias & the Judicial System. Judge Alice Lytle looks at government policies toward women & children within the judicial system. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Tues., Feb. 25
Black Women Crusading for a New America: Under Attack but Fighting Back! Ethel Long-Scott, Women's Economic Agenda Project, looks at growing stratification within the Black community & the role Black women play in social & economic justice movements. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Brown Bag Lectures

A series of free lectures held weekly on Wednesdays at the Parnassus campus (P), Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus; monthly on Thursdays in Rm. 125, UCSF-Mission Center Building (MCB), 1855 Folsom St.; and monthly on Tuesdays in Herbst Hall, Mount Zion Medical Center of UCSF (MZ), 1600 Divisadero. All lectures held at noon. For further information call 476-4394.

Jan. 8
Lasers in Dentistry. (P)

Jan. 15
(See Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration.)

Jan. 21
You & Your Money Health/Get Into Great Financial Shape in 1992. (MZ)

Jan. 22
Retiring on an *Increasing* Income Stream. (P)

Jan. 23
How to Buy a New or Used Automobile. (MCB)

Jan. 29
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. (P)

Feb. 5
(See Black Heritage Month events.)

Feb. 12
Demystifying Sexual Attraction. (P)

Feb. 18
How to Work with Difficult People. (MZ)

Feb. 19
Gamma Knife Radiosurgery. Learn about bloodless brain surgery. (P)

Feb. 20
Strategies for Job Change. (MCB)

Feb. 26
Cochlear Implants. New advances for overcoming deafness. (P)

Campus Tours

All tours are free and take place at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays, Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 and Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25. Meet in the lobby of Medical Sciences, 513 Parnassus. For further information call 476-4394.

Breast Cancer Screening

Women can have low-cost mammograms—X-rays to screen for breast cancer—from a mobile van that travels to convenient Bay Area locations. The procedure takes approximately 20 minutes and costs $60. Your physician's approval is required, plus his/her full name, address & telephone number to assure results are mailed promptly. Appointments must be made at least a month in advance. Find out when the van will be in your neighborhood by calling 476-2193 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. A $60 mammography screening also is available at the Mount Zion Hospital of UCSF Radiology Department. Call 885-7710.

Cancer Hotline

The UCSF Cancer Referral Service enables cancer patients to place just one telephone call and learn the names of UCSF doctors specializing in the kind of treatment they need. Call 1-800-888-8664.

Cole Hall Cinema

Films are shown on Thursdays and Fridays in Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Children under 14 $2; UCSF students & Millberry Union members, $2.50; other students & seniors, $3; general $3.50. Movies subject to change. Call 476-2542.

Jan. 9 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Jan. 10 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
The Doctor.

Jan. 16 at 5:45 & 8 p.m.
Jan. 17 at 6:30 & 8:45 p.m.
Boyz 'N the Hood.

Jan. 23 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Jan. 24 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
The Commitments.

Jan. 30 at 5:45 & 8 p.m.
Jan. 31 at 6:30 & 8:45 p.m.
My Own Private Idaho.

Feb. 6 at 5:45 & 8 p.m.
Feb. 7 at 6:30 & 8:45 p.m.
Dead Again.

Feb. 13 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Feb. 14 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
Frankie & Johnny.

Feb. 20 at 5:45 & 8:30 p.m.
Feb. 21 at 6:30 & 9:15 p.m.
The Fisher King.

Feb. 27 at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.
Feb. 28 at 6:30 & 9 p.m.
Rambling Rose.

Women's Programs

Unless otherwise noted, events are sponsored by UCSF Women's Resource Center. For recorded program information call 476-0400. To pre-register for workshops call 476-5836.

Tues., Jan. 21
Naming Names. Is it right to identify alleged rape victims in the news media without their consent? Sponsored by UCSF Rape Prevention Education Program. Call for location. Noon-1 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 30
Spike & Spite: Black Women at the Periphery of Film. Julianne Malveaux, nationally syndicated columnist, discusses the messages Spike Lee is sending about Black women & why. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Thurs., Feb. 6
Stress First Aid for the Working Woman: How to Keep Cool When You're Under Attack. Co-sponsored by UCSF Associated Business Officers Group. Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

(Also see Black Heritage Month & Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration events.)

Outdoors Unlimited

Outdoors Unlimited is a cooperative resource center for outdoor recreation and adventure, serving both the UCSF campus and the general public. It provides skills training, equipment rentals, trip planning information and a place to meet others with similar interests. To receive a quarterly listing of Outdoors Unlimited trips and clinics, call 476-2078.

Tues., Jan 28
Welcome to Outdoors Unlimited. OU Center, on Parnassus Ave. between 3rd & 4th Aves. 7:30 p.m.

Recreation & Fitness

Have fun & get fit in 1992 at Millberry Union Fitness Center. A wide variety of classes & workshops including step aerobics, aerobics for men, nutrition & weight management programs, pre- & post-natal exercise & more. **Winter registration for the public begins Tues., Jan. 7.** Millberry Union, 500 Parnassus. For more information and a free brochure call 476-1115.

Institute of Healing Arts & Sciences

All talks are free and held on Fridays at noon in Rm. 721, Nursing Bldg., enter through 521 Parnassus. Call Marie Lehrer at 584-4416 for details.

Jan. 10
Being with Yourself: Why, When & How?

Jan. 17
Altered States of Consciousness in Psychotherapy: Metaphors of Human Experience.

Jan. 24
How to Manage Physical & Emotional Stress.

Jan. 31
Nutrition & Immunity: Myths & Reality.

Feb. 7
We Don't Seem to Have Time for Sex—And When We Do We're Too Tired.

Feb. 14
New Look at Financial Investment.

Feb. 21
Bridging Biomedicine & Ancient Healing—Psychoneuroimmunology.

Feb. 28
Holodynamics.

Baptiste Method Yoga Class for Mind/Body/Spirit. Offered Monday-Friday in Rm. 130, 521 Parnassus at 5:30 p.m. Saturday morning classes also available. For prices & pre-registration call 387-6833. Free introductory class: Fri., Jan. 3.

Multiple Helpers Outreach Network Support Group. For victims & survivors of violent trauma. Ages 18 & over. Meets on Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-noon and on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m. in Rm. A222, Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute, 401 Parnassus; and from 7-10 p.m. in Rm. 517, Nursing Bldg., enter through 521 Parnassus. For further information call the helpline at 759-7923, 7 a.m.-10 p.m. daily.

Blood Donation

Tues., Jan. 28.
Campus Blood Drive. Blood may be given in the Millberry Union Conference Center, 500 Parnassus, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., and School of Nursing Bldg. mezzanine level, enter through 521 Parnassus, 11:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

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Senior Health Education Program

Free lectures by UCSF staff geared to senior citizens. Call 476-4394 for complete schedule and to confirm events.

Thurs., Jan. 16
Gastrointestinal Illness. Seventh Ave. Presbyterian Church, 1329 7th Ave. 10:45 a.m.

Thurs., Jan. 23
Cultural Variations in Health & Healing. Senior Power's Thursday Club, Mendelsohn House, 737 Folsom St. 1 p.m.

Fri., Jan. 24
Understanding the Human Brain. St. Mark's Senior Center, 1101 O'Farrell St. 10:45 a.m.

Mon., Jan. 27
Emotional Problems of the Elderly. Diamond Senior Center, 117 Diamond St. 12:45 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 30
Skin Care. St. Philip's Senior Center, 725 Diamond St. 11 a.m.

Tues., Feb. 4
Arthritis. Visitacion Valley Senior Center, 50 Raymond Ave. 11 a.m.

Wed., Feb. 5
Use & Abuse of Drugs. Bernal Heights Senior Center, 515 Cortland Ave. 12:40 p.m.

Tues., Feb. 18
Health & Social Cost of the Nuclear Arms Race. Dolger Senior Center, 101 Lake Merced Blvd. 10:30 a.m.

Great Expectations Programs for Parents

The UCSF Birth Center offers the following lectures on Wednesdays for new & prospective parents. $5 per individual or couple. Call 476-MOMS for location, registration & information.

Jan. 8
Working Pregnant—Pregnancy, Stress & the Workplace.

Jan. 22
Financial Planning for Your Child's Future.

Feb. 26
The Second Year of Life: Challenges to Parent & Child.

Health Talks

A series of free lecture/discussions sponsored by Public Service Outreach Programs. Held at UCSF-Laurel Heights (LH), 3333 California St., or the Parnassus campus (P) in Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. 7-8:30 p.m. Free parking available. Call 476-8429 for details.

Thurs., Jan. 9
New Vistas in Vision Care. (LH)

Thurs., Jan. 23
Stress & Coping Following Manmade & Natural Disasters. (P)

Thurs., Feb. 27
Twelve Steps to Cancer Prevention. (P)

Volunteer Orientation

Program to acquaint new & prospective volunteers with opportunities available in the Medical Center at UCSF. Held in Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute Auditorium, 401 Parnassus, except the Thurs., Feb. 5, meeting, which will be held in Rm. 192, Long Hospital, 505 Parnassus. For further information call 476-1196.

Thurs., Jan. 9 & Feb. 5, 9-11 a.m.
Tues., Jan. 21 & Feb. 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

UCSF
University of California, San Francisco
News and Public Information Services
513 Parnassus Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94143-0462

She could no longer exercise.
She could no longer work.
She couldn't even sit.

It started with fatigue.

Jean Davis felt a heaviness in her back. She attributed it to working out too much on her rowing machine.

But soon a rash appeared, accompanied by a prickly heat. It went down her back along the spine, and in a line around the left side of her waist. A day or two later, the rash grew into ugly welts.

Jean's family doctor diagnosed what Jean already suspected: shingles. Shingles occur when a dormant virus, the same one that causes chicken pox, reactivates. Shingles are prevalent in older people. Jean was 64.

About a week after the welts broke out, the pain began. A constant, intense burning pain. The welts went away after a few months, but the pain persisted. Known as post-herpetic neuralgia, the pain resulted from the viral damage of nerve cells.

The pain debilitated Jean. She could no longer exercise. She could no longer work in the family auto parts store, keeping the books. She couldn't even sit for very long. Because sitting was uncomfortable, Jean could only endure short rides in the car. She couldn't go on trips, which she and her husband, Fran, loved to do. Or go shopping. Or go to the theater.

"I had to give up doing nearly everything," says Jean. The post-herpetic neuralgia basically confined Jean to her Oakland home. She spent most of her time lying down. But even then there was no relief. The pain disturbed her sleep.

Jean tried a variety of remedies. She took cortisone injections, codeine tablets, and "every analgesic on the market." But nothing worked. She turned to unconventional treatments, such as acupuncture. But those didn't work either.

Jean's pain and debilitation went on for five years. Inevitably, it took a heavy mental and emotional toll. Before the constant pain, Jean was a positive, upbeat person, with a ready smile. But the pain and the inability to do anything about it often left her depressed and frustrated.

A year ago, however, things changed for the better. Jean heard about an experimental treatment at UC San Francisco, which involved a common, local anesthetic called lidocaine. In collaboration with neurologists Howard Fields and Michael Rowbotham of the UCSF Pain Management Center, a Los Altos pharmacist named Harry Hind had developed a lidocaine gel to numb the damaged nerves. Hind is an emeritus board member of the UCSF Foundation and an alumnus of UCSF's School of Pharmacy.

Years ago, doctors had injected lidocaine to relieve post-herpetic neuralgia. But administering lidocaine by injection often provided only temporary relief because lidocaine quickly dissipates after injection. Plus, a patient must travel to a clinic for an injection—a painful travail for relief.

A slow-release mechanism was needed, one the patient could administer at home. Hind figured that a transdermal medication, which crosses through the skin and into the body, might solve the problem. So he experimented with standard methods for delivering drugs through the skin.

The skin's fatty, or lipoidal, layers block water-soluble materials, but not certain kinds of fat-soluble materials. To overcome this obstacle, Hind dissolved lidocaine base, which is fat-soluble, in a propylene glycol solvent. He then added polysorbate, which scientists theorize disrupts the intercellular makeup of the skin's lipoidal layers. This disruption allows the lidocaine solution to flow more easily through the skin.

Finally, Hind gelled the solution with carbomer to make it more manageable. Plastic bandages placed over the painful areas could then hold the gel in place. A lidocaine solution also was impregnated into the adhesive of a patch, which also is placed on the skin.

Jean was amazed when she received her first treatment at UCSF. Her pain subsided within minutes. And it stayed away as long as she kept the patch on. Other patients have experienced relief for up to two weeks after taking off the patch, for reasons that are not entirely clear.

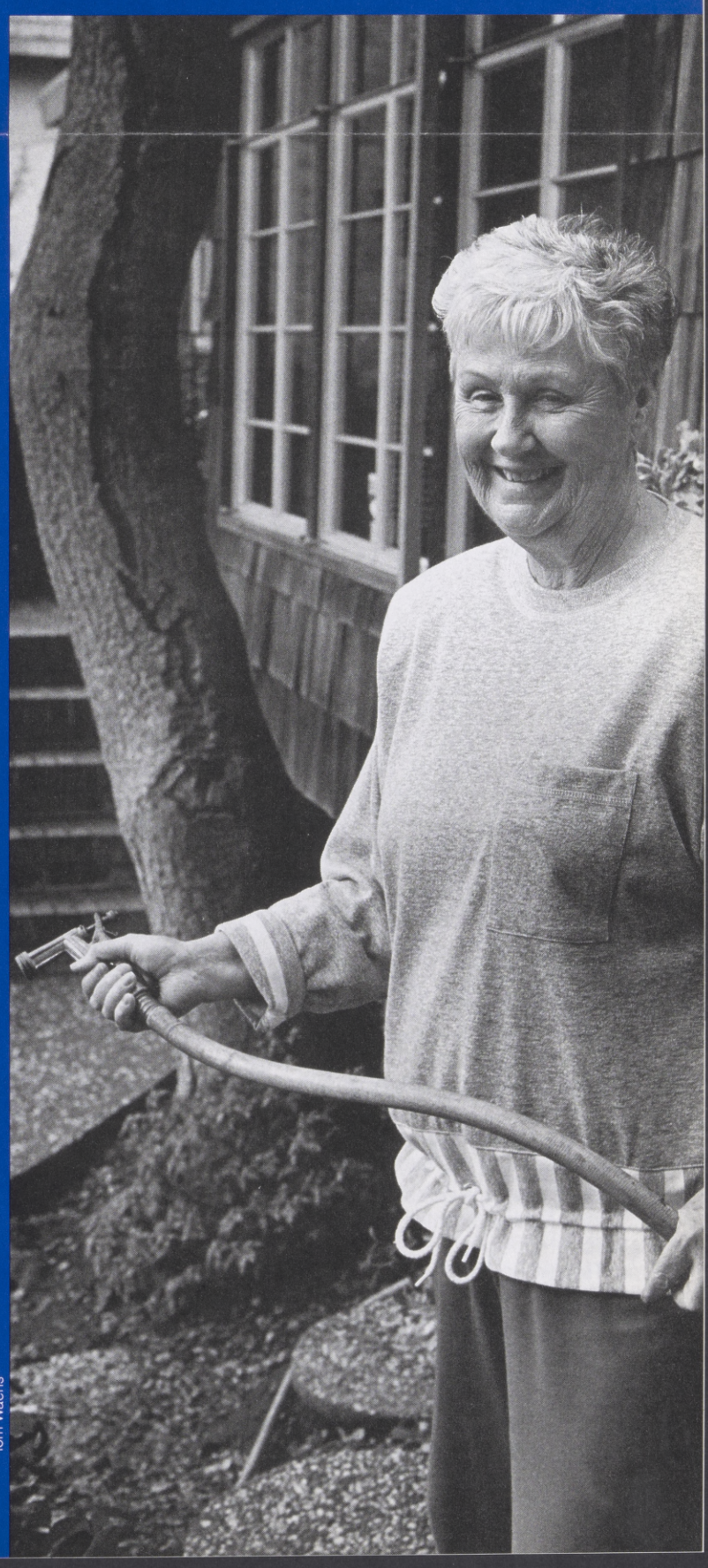
Jean wears a patch every day now. She puts it on first thing in the morning after taking a shower, and takes it off in the late afternoon. She can't wear it all the time because it would irritate her skin. Still, the patch provides great relief.

Jean's life is virtually back to normal. She can sit comfortably again. She can get around in the car. She can go shopping. She can go on trips. Her old, upbeat personality is back . . . along with the easy laugh that belies the years of pain.

"The patches have been my salvation," says Jean.

(For further information, call the UCSF Pain Management Center at 476-0418.)

—Marshall Krantz



Tom Wachs

January/February 1992

To Our Neighbors

UCSF Performs City's First Lung Transplant

Family Communication and Teenage Obesity

Bathroom Plunger Could Change How CPR is Performed

UCSF

University of California, San Francisco
513 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94143-0462

More News for You

David Powers

Laurel Mellin goes over a case with psychiatrist Kim Norman.

New Reasons for Teenage Obesity

Family communication and closeness—not diet and exercise—are the key environmental factors that influence teenage obesity, according to a new study by Laurel Mellin, director, UCSF Center for Child & Adolescent Obesity.

Reporting last month at the American Dietetic Association annual meeting in Dallas, Mellin said genetic factors are clearly the best predictors of weight problems during adolescence, but they are compounded by environmental factors. She emphasizes that diet and exercise do play a role in teenage obesity, but study findings showed overwhelmingly that they do not have as great an effect as a teenager's feelings of isolation from family members.

"When the emotional connection between parent and child is less than the child needs, it appears that a young person often develops an excessive appetite which, in those genetically predisposed to obesity, can trigger the onset or exacerbation of a weight problem," says Mellin.

Study findings were based on data from 254 teenagers around the country who were enrolled in weight management programs.

For further information on teenage obesity and adolescent weight management programs, call 476-2502.

Preventing PID Disease

The most devastating and costly disease affecting women today—pelvic inflammatory disease or PID—can be prevented. PID is the most common serious complication of sexually transmitted diseases, primarily chlamydia and gonorrhea. "It is a serious reproductive health problem, which not only causes acute pain and discomfort, but can rob women of their ability to have children, or if one becomes pregnant could cause death," says Eugene Washington, co-director of the UCSF Center for Reproductive Health Policy Research. UCSF and government researchers are urging health care providers and communities to adopt more aggressive measures to prevent PID, including better screening of patients for sexually transmitted diseases that cause PID and improved school sex education programs.

An End to Biopsies for Heart Transplant Patients?

Heart transplant patients now are subjected to a series of uncomfortable biopsies to determine if their body is rejecting the transplant. Up to five tiny pieces of heart tissue are taken at a time by placing a catheter in a neck vein and guiding it into the heart. The presence of a type of white blood cell in the tissue indicates the patient is rejecting the heart. In the not too distant future, there might be an alternative to these biopsies. While more studies need to be conducted, according to UCSF cardiologist Christopher Wolfe, Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy (MRS) may provide a way to detect rejection by observing images and chemical composition in the body without removing any tissue and without using radiation.